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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PREVENTION OF STREAM AND LAKE POLLUTION[1]

The Committee on Prevention of Stream and Lake Pollution presents this as its final report.

In giving consideration to the question of prevention of stream and lake pollution, your Committee has construed its scope in this field as confined to streams and lakes which necessarily are utilized as the source of water supply for municipalities, and solely to such waterways as may receive pollution above the water supply intakes of the municipalities affected.

The primary object sought in the original appointment of this committee was the creation, by either inter-state or national governmental action, of some controlling power which would have supervision over unnecessary pollution of streams and lakes, the waters of which were required for municipal supplies, and to be endowed with the necessary power to enforce such just and reasonable regulations as would tend towards the preservation of the pristine purity of such waters. It was realized at the outset that as many of the waterways were inter-state, and even international, no comprehensive action could be secured by separate state laws unless a general coöperative spirit were inspired which would recognize either a joint control, or the adoption of a harmonious code of laws and regulations embodying an altruistic conception of the mutual benefits to be derived by all of the affected interests.

Since the original appointment of the committee, a certain measure of this ideal spirit has evinced a tendency towards realization, and conditions have gradually developed which have been productive of much greater unity of action along the lines of preventive pollution, through the broad influence of the United States Public Health Service, the International Boundary Commission, the American Public Health Association, and the many State health boards which are rapidly broadening their scope of action along scientific lines to a point that eventually will preclude the necessity for any drastic inter-state action.

The Committee on Sanitary Control of Waterways of the American Public Health Association has made some exhaustive studies of waterway sanitation and the problems of waterway pollution, the tenor of which was published in Vol. 4, 1914, of the *American Journal of Public Health.* A later report of the same committee presented in October, 1916, dealing somewhat more comprehensively with the subject at issue, was submitted "as an endeavor to state principles and practice in the light of present knowledge" of certain phases of the art of sewage treatment and waterways sanitation. As this report has recently been published in full in the *American Journal of Public Health,* there would appear to be no valid reason for quoting at large from it, but we deem it pertinent to give herein the six basic principles laid down by said committee as a "code of regulations for the sanitary control of waterways":

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[1] Presented at the Richmond convention, May 11, 1917.

1. There shall be no objectionable deposits at any point in a waterway as a result of sewage or other waste discharges therein.
2. There shall be no local nuisance created at or in the vicinity of any sewage or industrial wastes outfall, arising from excessive turbidity or the production of odors.
3. There shall be no general nuisance created in a waterway due to excessive turbidity or to odors, as a result of sewage or other wastes discharged therein.
4. There shall be no interference with, or undue burden upon, mechanical operation or bacterial efficiency of water purification plants procuring their water from a waterway.
5. There shall be no active (potentially dangerous) bacterial contamination or gross pollution of properly located and authorized shellfish beds.
6. There shall be no active (potentially dangerous) bacterial contamination or gross pollution of properly located and authorized bathing beaches and other bathing places.

Of the six articles of the code quoted above, only the first four would seem to come within the scope of what your committee considers its legitimate premises, although all are equally important from the broad sanitary view point.

In the light of conditions previously cited, and in view of the fact that the Committee on Sanitary Control of the American Public Health Association is handling the subject so comprehensively, it would appear to be a waste of effort and energy for the American Water Works Association to attempt to duplicate this work, and furthermore it would be futile for your committee to indulge in the task of writing a voluminous report which would of necessity follow along parallel lines to the report quoted. For the same reason your committee submits this as its final report, with the suggestion that the committee be relieved from further duties.

Assuming the prerogative of an advisory body, we desire to emphasize the point that it is a serious fallacy to entertain the belief that any degree of sewage treatment will eliminate the necessity for a water purification plant, if the water supply receives the sewage effluent, but it also is an indisputable fact that the final resultant of the water purification plant will be improved to some extent, at least, in a varying proportion to the degree of efficiency obtained in the sewage treatment, whether the records show it or not.

Summed up in one broad statement, the committee recommends that in every instance where conditions make such action reasonably necessary and economically feasible, all sewage should be adequately treated before being turned into any waterway which may be utilized as a source of municipal water supply within the area affected by such pollution, but that in every individual case, local and general economic conditions should govern the decision as to whether it is more advantageous to prevent or minimize the existing pollution, or whether the location of the intake or source of supply should be changed to a point beyond danger from the polluted area.

THEODORE A. LEISEN,
M. N. BAKER.

THEODORE A. LEISEN, PRESIDENT 1917–1918